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# Kennedy's Curious Decisions Cited in Cuban Invasion Story

**WHAT** went wrong with the U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba is rapidly becoming an open secret.

In a new contribution to the historical record, Charles J. V. Murphy of Fortune magazine's Washington Bureau tells how President Kennedy whitewashed down the landing expedition with conflicting decisions that doomed it.

Mr. Murphy's play-by-play account in September Fortune bears the earmarks, at least, of co-operation by high military sources. The facts set forth put Mr. Kennedy in the role of a man seemingly trying to invade and not to invade at the same time.

The result, as Mr. Murphy shows, was the political defeat of the "liberation" project. It cannot properly be called a military failure—scant recompence for the men who died on the beachhead—since the military plan was never carried out.

**THE INVASION** was, of course, an operation of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Department of Defense assisted but had no direct responsibility.

The manager of the project was Richard M. Bissell, a deputy of Allen W. Dulles, CIA's director. An economist, Mr. Bissell is described by Mr. Murphy as "a highly practical executive."

Exiles from Fidel Castro's Cuba were being recruited in the United States and trained in Guatemala in the summer of 1960. By fall, a small air contingent was developed, with obsolete B-26s and some transports for paratroopers.

President Eisenhower who kept informed, like last, through review of the venture was in November, before day final plan had taken form. A plan was reviewed, however, by the Joint Chiefs of Staff early in January, before the change in Administration.

**MR. KENNEDY**, upon taking office, asked for a CIA briefing, which was given by Director Dulles and Mr. Bissell. The new President then got a favorable appraisal of CIA's plan from the Joint Chiefs.

The action, as outlined in



RICHARD M. BISSELL  
He was manager of project.

led to the Bay of Pigs. This was only a week before the embarkation.

1. That the dropping of leaflets and the broadcasting of appeals to the Cuban people would be canceled.

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2. THAT THE CUBAN exiles were NOT to strike with their B-26s on the morning of the landing. This decision, the evening before the assault, resulted from the raid of April 13. A concocted report had been given out that Castro's own defecting airmen had done the bombing. Adlai Stevenson, uninformed of what was going on, had vouched for this in the United Nations.

3. That planes from the U.S. carrier Boxer would NOT protect the landing ships if they withdrew to international waters. The President was awakened at 4 o'clock in the morning of D-day to decide this.

4. That the exiles' B-26s could attack Castro's airfields. This, at noon on April 17, followed word that the landing had stalled in for lack of air support. A small attacking force on the morning of the 18th found the fields fogged in.

5. That jets from the Boxer would protect ships supplying the harried infantrymen on the beachhead. This was to be for exactly one hour, starting at 10:30 AM on April 18, while the remaining B-26s hit as hard as they could.

6. **THIS BOXER** decision, which ends the series, was reached about 3 AM of the same day, after a White House reception for Congress and the Cabinet. It would leave an interesting problem for historians:

• Why the one-hour limitation? Was it legality or morality? If so, was one hour less illegal or less immoral than two hours or more? If there was to be participation at all, then why was not victory—the defeat of "Bad Neighbor"—the dominant consideration?

The defeat of the expedition was complete.

AFTER VARIOUS delays, the invasion was set for April 17. At the State Department on April 4, Mr. Bissell previewed the landing for the President, the Secretaries of State, Treasury and Defense, and other military and political advisers of Mr. Kennedy.

J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was invited.

Others were far along ahead. Adlai Stevenson had explained, according to a breakdown with communists in this hemisphere had to come anyway. Secretary of State Rusk's reservations and the opposition of Under Secretary Roswell, not present, were not in evidence until later.

From this point to the end, political considerations dominated.

APART FROM failure to make one big decision—whether to have an all-out assault or call it off—there was no lack of decisions. President Kennedy and his crew, making these rulings:

1. That planes from a U.S. carrier would NOT be on call.

2. That the Cuban exiles were to use their B-26s just twice. They would raid Castro's air fields on April 18, then strike again on the 19th, the morning of the landing. The first strike was a success, but four obsolete B-26 jet trainers that Castro had inherited from Batista were undamaged. Using摇滚, they could be deadly.

3. That the landing area was in a broad, 100-mile stretch from the Cuban city of Trin-